Hospital Inpatient Discharges (SPARCS De-Identified File): CY 2018

OVERVIEW

**Office of Quality and Patient Safety
Center for Applied Research and Evaluation**

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Health Data NY

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Department of Health

General Description

SPARCS is a comprehensive data reporting system established in 1979 as a result of cooperation between the health care industry and government. Initially created to collect information on discharges from hospitals, SPARCS currently collects patient level detail on patient characteristics, diagnoses and treatments, services, and charges for every hospital discharge, ambulatory surgery, outpatient services and emergency department visit in New York State.

The enabling legislation and regulations for SPARCS are located under Section 28.16 of the Public Health Law (PHL), Section 400.18 of Title 10 (Health) of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York (NYCRR).

More information on SPARCS may be found on the New York State Department of Health's website at: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/.

A goal of the Department is to provide the public with easy to use tools to answer health care questions while protecting the privacy of the individual patient. Protecting the privacy of the patient in the collected data is a primary function of the Department of Health SPARCS program staff. SPARCS has assigned personnel whose responsibility is the monitoring of the release and handling of the data. SPARCS utilizes information technology protections for the collection, storage, and release of data.

SPARCS data files are available with and without identifying data elements. A multi-tiered approach in the release of data is utilized to provide patient privacy while still providing useful health care data for the public and researchers. While there are three levels of data release—de-identified, limited and identifiable—this document describes the de-identified release.

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Data Methodology

Data Collection Process:

Any facility certified to provide Article 28 inpatient services, ambulatory surgery services, emergency department services or outpatient services is required to submit data to SPARCS via the Health Commerce System (HCS). The HCS provides an efficient and secure data transmission option using the powerful Internet Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption technology.

Submitting facilities include New York State Hospitals and Diagnostic and Treatment Centers (D&TCs, commonly known as clinics). This includes both hospital-owned and operated, as well as free-standing D&TC facilities. Regardless of their ownership, each facility must report data for each specific facility.

More information on how SPARCS data is collected may be found at:
http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/data_collection.htm

De-identification

The de-identified data file contains basic record level detail; it does not contain data that is protected health information (PHI) under HIPAA. The health information contained in the file is not individually identifiable; all data elements that are considered identifiable have been redacted. The de-identified data file is public under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). The de-identified dataset allows the public to answer such questions as the number of hospitalizations that occur in the State annually or the annual number of children born in the State's hospitals.

Limitations of Use

The de-identified data file contains basic record-level detail. It does not contain data that is protected health information (PHI) under HIPAA. The health information is not individually identifiable; all data elements that are considered identifiable have been redacted.

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Department
of Health

Contact Information

New York State Department of Health

Center for Applied Research and Evaluation

Office of Quality and Patient Safety

Empire State Plaza

Corning Tower, Room 1938

Albany, New York 12237

Phone: (518) 473-8144

Fax: (518) 486-3518

E-mail: SPARCS.submissions@health.ny.gov
             SPARCS.requests@health.ny.gov

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